

# Department of Sociology & Criminology

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**Dr. Kelly Welch** will be bringing two teams of three to the **6th Annual Intercollegiate Criminal Justice Debate** hosted by Drexel University on **April 27th**. The topic this year is physician assisted suicide. Interested students should contact Dr. Welch for additional information.

# Interactions

## A Message from the Chair

Greetings to all. I hope that your semester has been going well.

As I mentioned in my last letter, the department devoted considerable time during the fall semester conducting searches for two new faculty members to replace Drs. Knapp and McFalls. I am very pleased to report that those searches ended successfully, and we have hired two superb international scholars, one in sociology and one in criminology. The sociology position will be filled by Dr. Ken Sun, a specialist in migration who has focused on issues surrounding transnational families, that is, families with members in different countries. Due to prior commitments, Dr. Sun will be arriving in spring 2020 from Taiwan where he currently teaches. The criminology position will be taken by Dr. Heidi Grundetjern, a native of Norway who is currently at University of Missouri, St. Louis. Dr. Grundetjern specializes in gender and crime and has studied women's participation in the drug trade. She will start in fall 2019. They have both published in top journals and will be adding new and exciting courses to the curriculum. A future issue of *Interactions* will have a more complete bio for each. Until then, welcome to our newest department members!

Speaking of personnel changes, we were saddened to learn that Prof. Gay Strickler and Prof. Satya Pattanayak will be retiring at the end of the spring semester.

They are long-time department members who have made considerable contributions, and we will miss them a lot. Good luck to both as they begin a new chapter.

Department members were busy with a variety of other things in the fall beyond the job searches. One was a panel on mental health and stigma organized by Prof. Bergey with the help of sophomore sociology major Megan Burke ('21). The interdisciplinary panel examined causes and implications of stigma for mental health and was quite well attended. Prof. Bergey, who describes the panel in this issue, teaches a course on mental health and illness, as well as one on medical sociology.

One hallmark of the research done by our department is its relevance for pressing social issues. A good example of that is some joint work done by Professors Kramer and Remster on links between police stop and frisk behavior and police violence. Their research, recently published in the journal *Law and Society Review*, provides empirical evidence that can be used both to identify problematic patterns in the stops and potential solutions. Prof. Kramer has written a summary of the research for this issue of *Interactions*, and it makes for important reading for sociologists and criminologists alike.

We always enjoy hearing from former students, both majors and minors. In this issue, Greg Laudadio ('14; VU law school '17) talks

about how important and influential his criminology minor was. This included its impact on his studies as a political science major and his current work as a financial adviser.

Last year, Prof. Kelly Welch organized and led two teams of students, who participated in an intercollegiate criminal justice debate. The teams did us proud finishing second in the competition. Prof. Welch is once again spearheading this effort. This year's competition will be held at Drexel University on April 27, with the debate topic being physician assisted suicide. Prof. Welch will be reaching out to students, but I would also like to encourage you to think about participating. It's a great way of applying your knowledge and sharpening your critical thinking and presentation skills.

Finally, this year's Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference will take place in West Virginia. That's a bit far for us to go, so instead we will be organizing a mini-conference here at Villanova for our students. The idea will be the same – the opportunity to present your original work in front of other students and faculty members and get constructive feedback. The tentative date is April 26 and we will be contacting majors and minors with more information in the near future.

Good luck with the rest of the semester.

- Dr. Robert DeFina

## **Recent Publications**

An article written by **Dr. Kelly Welch** titled “The Effect of Minority Threat on Risk Management and the ‘New Disciplinology’ in Schools” was recently published in ***The Journal of Criminal Justice***.

**Dr. Lance Hannon** recently had an article titled “Neighborhood Residence and Assessments of Racial Profiling Using Census Data” published in ***Socius***.

An article written by **Dr. Robert DeFina** and **Dr. Lance Hannon** titled “De-unionization and Drug Death Rates” was recently published in ***Social Currents***.

An article written by **Dr. Rory Kramer** and **Dr. Brianna Remster** titled “Stop, Frisk, and Assault? Racial Disparities in Police Use of Force during Investigatory Stops” was recently published in ***Law and Society Review*** and was also featured on the journal’s **[blog](#)**.

## **A Foundation in Criminal Justice - by Gregory Laudadio, PSC '14 and JD '17**

Studying criminal justice and sociology at Villanova gave me a unique ability to understand complex issues and meaningfully engage with diverse groups of people. My name is Greg Laudadio and I graduated with a Bachelor’s degree from Villanova in 2014 and a Juris Doctor degree from Villanova Law in 2017. I was a political science major, but I minored in criminal justice and took several sociology courses. I knew going into college that politics was going to be my main field of study, but in my sophomore year I began to feel that I wanted, and needed, to expand my focus. At the time, I hardly knew anything about the study of crime and social interaction, but the course descriptions captured my interest, so I signed up for an introductory class with Dr. Allison Payne and was hooked. From there I knew that I had found the perfect minor.

The thing that I always enjoyed about my political science classes was

the focus on human behavior. Broadly speaking, governments exist to organize societies that are otherwise disorganized. While the modern political dialogue tends to focus on party-based issues, academically, the focus is on the substantive aspects of governmental and quasi-governmental structures. In other words, the “human element.” Viewed through that lens, the connection to criminology and sociology is organic. Sociology focuses on human interactions and how they are influenced by larger social forces, including government, while criminology focuses on the issues that arise from human interactions within societies.

So what did this mean for me? It meant that I was able to learn about the challenges universally impacting all societies. More importantly, it taught me to think critically, question my world, and analyze issues from both a broad and narrow perspective. My classes

with Dr. Kelly Welch and Dr. Jill McCorkel were particularly influential, as both professors structured their classroom environment to be especially thought-driven. One of the things that I think separates Villanova from other schools is the focus on independent thinking, and my classes with Dr. Welch and Dr. McCorkel certainly reinforced that point. This kind of environment allowed me to garner skills that I would use in law school and now as a young professional.

I am currently working as a financial advisor for Principal Financial Group® where I utilize the critical thinking and interaction skills that I cultivated during my time as an undergraduate. My position requires me to engage with a diverse group of clients to help them solve challenging and very personal issues. Without the foundation I gained as a criminal justice minor, I would not be able to help people as meaningfully as I do now.

# Measuring Bias in Police Violence

- by Dr. Rory Kramer

By now, you may be tired of the videos. Videos of police officers mistreating, disrespecting, hurting, and killing black people. Maybe you watch because it shocks you that police could treat civilians so badly, or because it reinforces your beliefs that policing is racist, or to find a non-racial justification of that policing. Regardless of why you might watch those videos, they expose the reality: Americans are divided in how we think about policing tactics. While most white people believe police are respectful and fair, the opposite is true of black people's views of police, who believe police are disrespectful and biased.

That divide is particularly powerful when faced with the dilemma of competing narratives about a police encounter. Accounts of police violence have been the trigger for civil unrest and rebellion in the United States for generations and today, have been the main driver of support for #BlackLivesMatter and its claims that police unjustly use force against black people. On the other hand, people who believe the police are being unduly criticized for using

force during tense encounters have rallied around #BlueLivesMatter or #AllLivesMatter. Dr. Brianna Remster and I used social scientific tools to systematically test these competing explanations.

In our work, published in *Law and Society Review*, we studied over two million pedestrian stops by New York police between 2007 and 2014. We measured whether the race and age of the person stopped, whether police pulled their gun, and whether civilian behavior are associated with observed differences in police violence. Scholarship has long documented that black people were disproportionately stopped by the NYPD, to the point that the policy was ruled unconstitutional in 2013. But no one had yet studied if, even after being racially profiled into being stopped, black people were more likely, in otherwise identical experiences, to be treated violently by police. In short, they were. Over the seven years studied, we estimated that had there been no racial disparity in police violence: 61,000 fewer black men in New York

would have been treated violently by police and over 2,000 fewer would have had guns pulled on them during investigatory stops. These disparities were greatest for youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 24. Therefore, as #BLM asserts, we found young black men were treated significantly more harshly than others by police.

Currently, along with a colleague at UC Davis, Dr. Remster and I are studying how gender intersects with the racial disparities we found to see if #SayHerName is right that social movements against racist policing should not be limited to males' experiences. We are finding it does, but in a complicated way. Women, regardless of race, are less likely to be stopped and to experience violence compared to same-race men, but their race is associated with their likelihood of experiencing violence. In other words, as scholars of intersectionality posit, black women's risk of violence when interacting with police is unique and is unlike white women's and black men's experiences.

**2018 American Society of Criminology (ASC) Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia.**

**Dr. Tom Arvanites** along with **Noelle Gambale '19** presented a paper titled "Segregation and the Drug War."

**Dr. Brianna Remster** and **Dr. Melissa Hodges** presented a paper titled "Labor Market Double Jeopardy: The Gendered Effect of Incarceration on Wages."

**Dr. Kelly Welch** presented a paper along with Dr. Peter Lehmann and Dr. Ted Chiricos titled "Punitive School Discipline and Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Criminal Justice Involvement."

**Dr. Allison Payne** is collaborating with Mei Yang and Dr. Denise Gottfredson on a paper that was presented and is titled "School Climate and Friendship Choices: A National Study."

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Farewell to **Dr. Gay Strickler** and **Dr. Satya Pattnayak** who will retire at the end of the spring semester. The Department thanks you for all of your years of service and wishes you the best of luck in your retirement!

**The Department of Sociology and Criminology** will host a **mini conference** in place of the MAUSRC this year. The tentative date is **Friday, April 26th**. All majors and minors will be contacted soon with more details.

**Find us online!**

[www.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/sociology.html](http://www.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/sociology.html)

## **A Conversation on Mental Health and Stigma** **-by Dr. Meredith Bergey**

Roughly 450 million people around the globe are affected by mental illness and yet an estimated 2/3 never seek help from a professional.<sup>1</sup> Stigma and discrimination are often significant contributing factors in this dynamic and in the lived experience of mental illness more generally.

Goffman's seminal 1963 writing on this topic depicted how stigma can be "deeply discrediting," reducing the carrier "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one."<sup>2</sup> More recent sociological work illustrates the various negative consequences of stigma associated with discrimination, status loss, and a negative sense of one's self and one's life chances.

To better understand and address the causes and implications of stigma in relation to mental health, I organized a panel event in November, sponsored by the Department of Sociology

and Criminology's Programming Committee, that brought together experts from various different backgrounds and fields to share their insights. Sophomore Megan Burke (SOC '21) assisted in planning the event and served on the panel, alongside myself, Dr. Linda Copel (Nursing), Dr. Joan Whitney (Counseling), Dr. Nancy Mott (LSS), Dr. Elizabeth Pantescio (Psychology), and Meghan Seibert (ECA '20).

What ensued was a rich discussion not only about combatting stigma, but also about supporting individuals with mental health concerns more generally. Conversation touched upon such topics as students' mental health needs, institutional resources available on campus, personal experiences involving stigma, and avenues for getting involved in mental health-related organizations on campus and more broadly. Topics also ranged from more micro

points of intervention (e.g., interpersonal exchanges) to the more macro (e.g., at the level of media, pop culture, institutions, and policy), as well as some contemporary research and theory from the various fields represented.

I would like to thank all of the participants and audience members for making the event a success and being part of an ongoing conversation.

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organization. (2001). *Mental disorders affect one in four people*. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media\\_centre/press\\_release/en/](https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/)

<sup>2</sup>Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of the spoiled identity*. London: Penguin.



**Drawing by Megan Burke, SOC '21**